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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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SUBJECT: "Gathering Greens in May"-Information from the Office of Experiment Stations, U.S. Department of Agriculture

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I've been asked to settle an argument.

A housewife writes: This spring I've taken advantage of the opportunity to get out in the country in my car again and gather wild greens. We like'em at our house. All except one member of the family. My oldest son says it's just superstitious to think that wild greens are good eating. Can you tell me if there are any scientific studies to back me up...or prove that I'm wrong?"

Well...I checked with the Office of Experiment Stations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and this is what I find about the food values of wild greens.

Recent research at several State Experiment Stations show that common greens from fields and woods are rich in vitamins A and C.

For example...scientists at the New Mexico Station have found that dock, pigweed, wild mustard, lambsquarter and Russian thistle are particularly rich in carotene--that's the source of vitamin A...and ascorbic acid--or vitamin C. They find that dandelion, purslane and sowthistle are less rich.

At the Florida Station...scientists report they have found the three common wild greens--pokeweed, coffeeweed, and lambsquarter--all show up well in vitamins.

Scientists at the Oklahoma and Maine Experiment Stations have made tests to see how wild greens compare with cultivated greens in vitamin value.

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In Oklahoma...they tested the wild greens fresh...cooked...and frozen. And the scientists found that the pokeweed, tall dock, and curley dock contained twice as much vitamin C as the spinach tested at the same time. They found that poverty weed, shepherd's purse, and lambsquarter contained about the same amount...while chickweed, dandelion, and prickly lettuce contained less.

At the Maine Station...scientists reported that dandelions and fiddleheads (or ostrich feathers you may know them) have about the same riboflavin value as cultivated greens. Riboflavin is one of the B vitamins.

So you see...the evidence is on Mom's side this time. Wild greens are good sources of both vitamins and minerals. And when you know your greens and know how to prepare them properly they make mighty good eating too.

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